Q What was it that you understood that you would be asked to do if you took the job?

A At that time I was thinking that most of my job might be in terms of how technology would support the learning process of the students.

I was not interested of being an MIS, Manager of Information Systems. Because for an MIS position, you can get plenty of them out of the Department of Education that pays a lot.

Q Is that right?

A In terms of MIS, there are a lot of positions out of the government that are real better positions than being there. The only reason for being there instead of being somewhere else is the opportunity to bring new ideas to the table in terms of how technology can improve learning.

Q Now, before you took the job were you at all aware of what is known as the E-Rate Program?

A No.

Q You had even heard of it?

A I heard about the word "E-Rate Program" in the interview that it was mentioned. But the details of E-Rate I didn't get into it until after I was in the position.

Q So during the interview somebody mentioned the E-Rate Program to you?

A Yes, because I made a question of what's going on

with the position, which are the projects, which is the states of the projects. I made questions of is there anything I should know that is important in terms of considering the position.

Q Who provided you this information? Do you remember?

A I don't remember it, but I know that E-Rate was mentioned at that time because when I assumed the position I knew that E-Rate was a project that was going on.

Q At the time of the interview when you were considering the job, what other information were you given concerning the E-Rate Program here in Puerto Rico?

A At that time, I had information that there was supposed to be a project for connecting all schools in the web. At that time the name was Edu-Net or so and I was amazed about that.

- O You were?
- A I was amazed about that.
- O About what?
- A About that idea that all schools can be connected.
- Q You thought it was a good idea?
- A Yes.
- Q But did you just hear about that project in your interview or had you heard that before?
 - A No. I had heard about the project before but I

didn't have the insights that the name was Edu-Net and that the funding was provided by E-Rate. I knew that later.

Q All right.

A That that was a good idea? Of course. Back in the early 1980's I myself made which was one of the first networks in a public school by some scrap computers we got from Colegio de Mayaguez. I bought the parts, I fixed the computers, I made the net and we had a computer lab in the Las Marías High School a long time before it was even thought to do that in the Department of Education, so I was one of the people that was thinking about that as early as the late '70s or early 80's.

I even put all my knowledge I had at that time and even my money to fix the things, to make it work and it did work. So I have said that if I did that with some scraps of computers from the Colegio de Mayaguez that were for disposal, think of what we can do with a whole project for the public schools in Puerto Rico. It was like "hey kid, you want some candies?" Of course I do.

Q Who did you understand would be the person that you reported to if you took the job?

A I was told at that time that this position reported directly to the Secretary of Education and most of the reporting I did it to José Santana or to Dra. Collazo.

O What was her first name?

A José Santana and Dra. Collazo, Carmen Collazo.

Because Santana was the Special Aid in the technology area.

Q And who was Dra. Carmen Collazo?

A She is the Associate Secretary for the Department of Education.

Q So you did not report directly to Mr. Rey Hernández?

A Most of the time. But every day transmittals, most of the time it was easier to give it to José or take it to Dra. Collazo and they would make the whole proceeding of trying to get it to the Secretary, but if it was real important, he had a meeting with us and at times with me and he asked me for the information. I gave him the information but most of the times he was a busy Secretary.

Q Who was Adonay Ramirez?

A Adonay Ramírez was a consultant that was hired by our office to help us in terms of managing the project of E-Rate. It was such a big project that we needed somebody to be directly in charge.

- Q Was he hired before you started working there?
- A He was hired after I arrived. I think a month later or so but he was being considered before I arrived.
- Q Who would think about the need to hire somebody to help manage the E-Rate Program specifically?
 - A That happened before I was interviewed, so what I

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am going to tell you is my opinion. My personal opinion of why I think it might happened.

Q Okay.

A I think that the Department of Education had such a huge project that they needed specialized resources specially in terms of project management to over look what was going on with that project.

MR. A.J. BENNAZAR: Oversee.

BY MR. CAMILO SALAS:

A (DEPONENT) Oversee that project and as far as I know, Mr. Ramírez is very professional with a lot of knowledge. He had the experience. He was one of the designers of the first networks in the Department of Education sometime ago and he had the experience and as far as I know and my experience with him is he was real good for me in terms of the information and the services that I got from his performance while I was in the project.

Q Are you talking about the E-Rate?

A Yes, in terms of the E-Rate. Because physically it wouldn't be possible for the Director of OSIATD to overlook that project and conduct all the other projects that were going into technology.

Q So it would have been impossible for you once you took the job to oversee that E-Rate Project?

A Absolutely. Just consider that that E-Rate Project

was assigned to every single school in Puerto Rico. I mean, public schools and at that time it was like 1,470 schools or something like that and it was a build-up that had to be tested and retested and we were accountable to check out that everything was going the way it should be. So it takes so much time and effort, that the Director of the Office be directly in charge of the micro management of the project. Otherwise, it would be impossible.

- Q So Mr. Ramírez was hired to do that micro management of the project, right?
 - A Yes.

- Q And he reported to you or to someone else?
- A The results of his work, and I won't say the total because I can't say it, I don't know. But all the results that I wanted from the E-Rate Project I asked him.
- Q What did you mean by "all the results you asked him?"
- A Facts, reports, assessments, information and instructions on how... First on instructions, consulting with him. How do you think we would work this and that and what the results might be taking into consideration what you are seeing and it was done through him.
 - O It was what?
 - A Done, performed through his services.
 - Q Did he have other people helping him with that or

he was doing that by himself?

A He started doing the whole thing but we couldn't provide quickly as needed all the resources, so he was asking and asking "I need help, I need help" so I think it was in the second contract or the contract was nullified in order that he could bring somebody that we can hire at that time and help in. Specially in terms of the everyday work. Not the high decisions, but in the everyday work.

Q When you say "contract", that means a contract of Mr. Ramírez with the Department of Education?

A An extension of his contract so he could bring somebody within his same contract and work with him.

Q In terms of putting a date to what is going on, he came to work basically a month after you took the job. So he would have come basically about July of 2001, right?

A Yes.

Q And he was doing this job by himself until approximately when? How long?

A I think it was approximately after the big effort we had in that semester. I think either it was at the end of the semester or the beginning of the other. I am not that sure about that.

Q So towards the end of 2001 or the earlier part of 2002?

A It might be either somewhere by the end of 2001 and

maybe the beginning or the renewal of the contract. His contract was renewed in the summer.

Q So his first contract would have taken from July 1, when he first came?

A Until June of 2002. What I am not sure of, because there were so many things happening is that I am not sure of the detail of when he got help.

Q I understand.

A I am sure that he asked me about the modification of the contract. What I don't remember is if it was the actual contract that was running at that time. I think that the Department of Education at that time was not allowing to do that, so I think that he had to wait until the end of the contract so that for the new contract of his second year, when I was in there, was that he was allowed to include in the new contract that he could have somebody to help him.

Q And the second contract for him would have started in the summer of 2002?

A It was always in the summer because it is the end of the fiscal year.

Q I understand that you are trying to recollect this from memory, but we can say basically that at least as you remember today from the time that he came on board on about July of 2001 until the summer of 2002, he was doing the job by himself.

A Yes. He was using part of the resources we had.

We had scarce resources but I remember because some of the time he was "hey Anibal, I need some people to go here and go there. How can I do it?" So I had to negotiate with Juan Carlos Sierra that was managing the progress "I need people from your people to help on the line.

And also, I remember that was one time when we made a request to "Oficina de Gerencia y Presupuesto" so they can manage to help me with, I think the request was for 300 admissions throughout the government because in a specific moment I wanted to make an assessment throughout all the schools in Puerto Rico and the only way I can do it because we don't have the resources to do such a task, was asking OGP to coordinate to help these people move on

MR. A.J. BENNAZAR: For the record, may I suggest that we translate "OGP Oficina de Gerencia y Presupuesto" as the Office of---

MR. CAMILO SALAS: It's a proper name. I knew that in Spanish. It is the Office of Management and Budget.

 $$\operatorname{MR}.$ A.J. BENNAZAR: Of the Commonwealth of Puerto R1co.

MR. CAMILO SALAS: But since it's a proper name and you can leave it in Spanish.

MR. A.J. BENNAZAR: Okay.

BY MR. CAMILO SALAS:

Q So at one point you asked the OGP for about 300 people?

A Yes. My first idea was to find 500. That's the people I need, but one thing is what you need and another thing is what you can get. So we started downsizing and I made a request for 300 and we finally got some 200 people.

Q And when was it that you made that request for 500 people about?

A I started talking about that by I think it was the end of September. I started talking with my staff that I needed to do such an assessment and we started talking about that.

- Q Of which year?
- A 2001.
 - Q When you first got there?
- 17 A Yes.
 - Q And who was your staff you were telling me?
 - A The staff were the leaders of the projects that were going on.
 - Q Okay.
 - A That I had at that time Juan Carlos Sierra who was on the help desk.
 - O He was on which program?
 - A Help desk and I had Armando González that was in

the Computer Center. I had Madeline Zayas that was the Director of the "Oficina de Apoyo Tecnológico a la Docencia". I had Alba Bermúdez, Adonay, Arnaldo Ramos, José, that was the Special Aid to the Secretary in that area.

O José? What is his last name?

A Santana. We started talking about that I had that idea. I think it was good so I brought it to the staff and we discussed it with the staff and after that we talked that with Dra. Collazo and she said it was okay and we go ahead.

So we let know the Secretary what we had. You know, he is the head of the Department so since its going to be a transaction between department and department and it has to be also...

I think we made a letter. When I say "we" I mean the Department of Education. The Department of Education made a letter to the "Oficina de la Gobernación" to let them know that we are needing all this collaboration from other agencies and at that time I had talked with Bene Díaz (sic) from OGP. I had already talked with him. I explained my idea and he said "it looks okay for me" I just let them know that we are going to need some sort of collaboration.

It was handled through the "Oficina de la Gobernación" or something like that and we started making arrangements for that assessment as I may say, it was mid October or something like that. Finally, the assessment was

done. That assessment.

- O When was it done?
- A I think it was early in 2002.
- Q Early you mean in---
- A In the beginning of the year.
- Q January, February?

A It should be somewhere... Of course, it wasn't in the first 15 days because schools were closed. So that means that it... I don't have the exact date because I don't have any of the data with me but it should be somewhere between the beginning of the school year and early February because we had to wait until the schools were opened that the technicians from the departments from the different offices of the government were back in business, settle their job and they have the time.

We trained them on what we were going to be doing for 2 days into the different jobs and then we send them to the schools. So I think it should have been by I say, the end of January or the beginning of February. Somewhere around that date. But that was a second assessment. We made some assessments before. We started making assessments in as early as the end of July. With the first connections I tried, I started making assessments.

- Q With the first connections you tried?
- A Yes, connections. Connecting schools into the net.

Q I don't understand.

A Okay. I was told when I arrived to the position, that in terms of this specific project that the project was going on. That schools were supposedly disconnected and that they were not connected so the first thing that I do with that is get an idea of which were connected and which were not.

When I arrived for the position there was not information at all. I couldn't make any contact with Mr. Peguero, so all the information I had was for every connection that was collected by Arnaldo Ramos and José Santana. At the time, the information I had was that the schools were relatively ready to be connected so I had the plan and we started making connections of what I called "V-1." That is the first generation. "V" is for validation.

I was trying to validate everything, so we selected schools all around the Island that included all kind of situations. We wanted small towns, big cities, even overseas. I mean, we selected Vieques who was on the other side of the sea. So I wanted to see if that situation of not being part of the main island was working so we selected Vieques, as I told you. Also big cities, small towns, in the high lands, in the coast. A sample of every kind of school that might be going on and trying to connect them. We started to do such a job in July so when the new school year

started, we can have an idea of what is going on.

Q You were doing that yourself or---

A No. At that time the suppliers at that time were in charge of doing so.

Q First of all---

A I visited myself some of the schools in that July to see what was going on. I wanted to see it by myself what was going on with the infrastructure, the equipments, the state of whatever was done. But in the every day, of course I was not there. I saw many things going on. E-Rate was one of the projects. A very important project but it was not the only one I was managing at that time and Adonay Ramírez at that time was there.

Q So that would have been about the time when Mr. Ramirez first came, right?

A Yes.

Q It says here, I think you have told me that you first started making assessments about the end of July.

A Yes. The way I worked is project management. Every project has to have a product.

O Has to have a what?

A Every project as an outcome, has to have a product. An accessible product that can tell me if the task was done, if it was performed and to which degree it is performed because I am accountable for that.

So everything I do, even products, I do it within the terms of project management and of course thinking that way, one of the first things that strike me in the face when I arrived to the position is "hey, I don't have any data that supports what is suppose to be here." I don't know if whether it was produced or it was not. I am just saying that I don't have it. So the first thing I...

I remember these words I said to the people in the first meetings we had "If I don't see it, it doesn't exist". So I was clear on that and I was consistently telling the people "I need evidence." "Give me evidence."

So, the first thing I started doing with this and with all the other projects I was ever given was "okay, let's produce evidence, specially if the state corridor is the Federal Government."

Q So basically you started doing assessments because you first got on this job and you wanted to see what was there?

A Basically you will see that in the reports I made at that time I called this first generation school V-1, Validation 1. In my schedule I had and I tried to make my best recollection, that I have I think at that time it was running in 3 or 4 generations. V-1 through V-3 or V-4. That was something I was planning to spread. The connection. The continuity throughout the Island.

At that time one of the thoughts that guided me in doing this is that first I want to check the situation in infrastructure of the schools, of the suppliers, of buyers, everything throughout the Island that can support this project and another thing that was very important for me is I want to have a sample of what technology means to all the sectors in Puerto Rico because I believe in technology and I want teachers and students and parents and the communities to have a taste of it so at the time I was not thinking of which is the best place to make it in other terms that were "let's have people have a sample of technology."

That at least every single school district or town in Puerto Rico have one taste that technology is available. That there is connectivity through the E-Rate Project so I don't have to send anybody to say, go to San Juan, go to Ponce, go to somewhere else to see technology. You have one center. At least one center in your town that you can go and see and you can imitate. That you can learn from whatever they are doing.

So we started making this generation V-1, V-2, V-3 and V-4 so they can spread and I even remember that I made a map in which I use to mark spots. That is very easy in terms of your sight, the use of a map and because of the yellow spots or green spots or whichever spots I used the dots on, I knew if it was spreading and where the disconnections are

occurring because I am from a small town and I remember when I was a kid, Las Marías was one of the last towns to see improvement and technology and all the things that were supposed to be.

So I want to make sure that kids in schools like
Las Marías and like Maraca and Jayuya and all those people in
"barrıadas" in the big cities are not going to pass through
the same things I passed. I just wanted to make sure there
was an equitable way that everybody would have a taste of
what technology is and we started making assessments on that.

That first time of assessments was to the best of my thoughts, was if the connectivity was acquired when we try to make it, if the schools have the cuadrants (sic) to do such a connection and the stability of the connection, is that I want to make sure that I would not connect in the morning and it would be disconnected in the afternoon. So the first things that were easy ones, is that I better be sure what was going on and I was looking before we started the second generation in V-2, how it was performing for a month this

V-1 generation.

At that time if I was told that everything was ready, I started my planning on that. I didn't have any other evidence that they say that everything is all right so as soon as I have validated the first generation, I will go

for the second one. As soon as I had the second one, I would go for the third one. It was on a stage process.

The first part of this V-1, schools were physically connected. Then, when the second generation were going to be physically connected, then I am going to work with some other things in another concern to validate this first generation so I can try with this first generation whatever I am going to be doing in a phase manner. Some sort of a step building up, building up. Whatever I am going to be doing with second, third or fourth generation, I am testing it with the first and that is the way we started documenting the whole thing.

Q You started the assessment not because there were any report problems. You started it because you wanted to see what was there and how you were going to implement this plan that you had formulated in yourself about how to go about it?

- A That is the way I worked.
- Q Right. The first assessment was not in response to any reports of problems or anything like that.
 - A At that time?
 - Q Yes.
 - A July?
- Q Yes.

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A No.

Q All right.

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A I knew at the time that there were no schools connected. Why? I don't know. I had no schools connected at all but I had been told that everything was ready so if everything was ready, let's go connect it.

- Q You knew that no schools were connected?
- A I was told.
- O You were told that no schools were connected?
- A No schools were connected.
- Q Who told you that?

A I think it should be... That's a question I should asked either in the interview or the first 1 or 2 or 3 days at the position.

O How---

A It had to be the people that were receiving me at the time who were José Santana and Arnaldo Ramos and the staff that ran the office at that time. It was the office that existed even though I was not there.

Q When you said that no schools were connected, what did you mean by that?

A I had to establish the connected schools.

According to the Education, it's a school where a station,

some sort of a station, a PC can connect to the Internet

through the infrastructure provided by the project and to be

sure that I wasn't wrong, then I consulted with the people in

USAC and they told me "you are right, that is a connected school." Sooner or later USAC is the first step in my stage to the Internet.

Q I am a little confused because you said that some people told you that no schools were connected but you also tell me that your staff told you that were ready to be connected.

- A Yes, and the providers told me we are ready.
- Q Who told you that "we are ready"?

A I should have... I don't remember the people exactly but exactly from both providers I had at that time should tell me that everything was all right because they move out with the people from my office to make connections there and everything was supposed to be ready.

At the time I think that PRT, the current Manager from PRT was Arnaldo Díaz and from DRC was the guy with the flap top, Juan Carlos.

- Q All right. The 2 providers were PRT and DRC?
- A Yes.

- Q That's what you are talking about?
- A Um-jum.
- Q All right. Now, let me get something clear. You are telling me that the people in your staff told you that the schools are not connected?
 - A Right.

0 But you are also telling me that the people of PRT 1 and DRC told you that the schools are ready to be connected? 2 3 Α Yes. 0 Now as I understand your testimony, "connected" to 4 you means the complete system is in place. Meaning 5 computers, T-1 lines, electricity in the schools and 6 7 everything that would allow a person to sit at a desk with a computer and be able 8 to---9 At least. Α 10 At least? 0 11 Reach the Internet. 12 Α All right, reach the Internet. Now did you at any 13 time during that period of time, ask anybody which entity was 14 supposed to provide those computers which would be an 15 integral part of the station that would allow a person to 16 connect to the Internet? 17 Α Sav it again? 18 If I understand you correctly, your staff told you 19 that the schools were not connected, right? 20 Α Um-jum. 21 And to be connected you would need a computer, 22 would you not? 23 There is supposed to be a computer. Α 24

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Right. Who was supposed to provide the computer?

A The Department of Education.

Q Did you ask in the Department of Education if all the computers had been provided?

A Yes.

Q And what did they tell you?

A There were computers over there.

Q Who did you ask?

A I asked the first 2 contacts I had.

Q I'm sorry?

A The first 2 contacts I had even in the interviews that were José Santana and Arnaldo Ramos. They were the people that were running the office before I was in the position. Whatever was done from January to June, they were the ones to know so they were logically the people that I were going to be asking what is going on.

Q Um-jum.

A And they gave me their feedback and also the technicians and the people in charge of the project that I have in the office.

At the time, the people from the "Centro de Cómputos" and Juan Carlos Sierra was in charge of the front desk and distribution of the computers. I think that the only people I didn't ask an opinion to were the janitors because they weren't part of the office but I heard everybody that had something to say. I would discriminate whatever I

heard but I listened to everybody that let me know what's going on.

- Q So you were told then by your staff, except the janitors of course, that in July of 2001 the Department of Education had purchased and installed all the computers that the Department of Education was required to provide at this compliment to the E-Rate Program?
 - A No. Sir.

- Q Okay. Well what was it that they told you?
- A At the time I asked are the schools connected.
- Q Well, each connected means?
- A Connected means that the computers are at the schools even though the servers, there are suppose to be 4 servers operating on each school.
 - Q Um-jum.
- A At least the servers should reach the Internet from the school so I consider it to be connected.
- Q I thought you told me that you considered to be connected meaning that there is a computer where somebody can sit down and log in into the Internet, right?
 - A Um-jum.
 - Q If you don't have a computer you can't log in.
- A Yes, but I have 4 servers. If a server can reach, then a computer should be able to reach.
 - Q Right. We clarified that and you asked whether or

not the schools are connected. I thought you told me earlier that connected meant all the equipment including not only the servers but also a computer.

A No, no, no, no, no. I meant that any PC that can be a stand alone computer from somebody or the server can reach the Internet if even the servers have connection.

To reach the Internet there is no reason for any computer connected on that web to reach the Internet and the information I have is that not even the servers were connected to the Internet.

- Q And who told you that?
- A The people. The technicians I had.
- Q Everybody except the janitors?
- A Um-jum.

- Q They told you that---
- A In the Department of Education.
- Q And the Department of Education told you that the servers were not connected.
 - A That there were no schools connected at that time.
- Q I have a problem with this word "connected" because what does it mean?
 - A It means that a computer---
- O A what?
 - A A computer.
- Q Um-jum.

A A PC can connect from the school at the other end of the web---

Q At the school.

A And the school can reach through the infrastructure provided by the project to the Internet.

Q Okay. Now, if there were no computers in the school---

A At least the server should be able to connect.

Q And who had gone to all the schools to check every drop with a computer to see if there was a connection?

A I didn't have the resources to do such a thing so that is why we selected some 30 or... Actually, V-1 went up to I think to 50 or something like that. I don't have the figures. The Department of Education should have that information. Since I can't do the whole system at the time, we selected those schools to make a test.

Q Which were how many schools?

A I think it should be somewhere around 50 with that first generation.

Q Let me get something straight then. In July of 2001, isn't it true that the Department of Education had not purchased the computers for each of the stations for each of the drops?

A The information I had at that time was that there were all the computers in the schools but that doesn't mean